

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-11 IGA-02 L-03 INR-09 RSC-01 RSR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8813

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2263

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, EAID, NI

SUBJECT: FAA HELP FOR NIGERIAN CIVIL AVIATION

REF: (A) LAGOS 2216 AND (B) STATE 49726

1. SUMMARY: FMG NOT LIEKLY BE RECEPTIVE TO PROPOSALS FOR A PRELIMINARY STUDY OR FOR CUTTING COSTS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY TURNING TO PRIVATE COMPANIES FOR PART OF ASSISTANCE TEAM. RATHER, MOT HAS CONCLUDED IT MUST PROMPTLY INITIATE AN ACTION PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR EARLY START ON CORRECTING DEFICIENCIES IN CIVIL AVIATION PROGRAM. RECOMMEEND FAA DESPATCH SCOPE AND COST ESTIMATES SOONEST. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL (A) REPORT OF DISCUSSION OF FAA ASSISTANCE WITH OBI REFLECTS HIS PREOCCUPATION, IF NOT OBSESSION, WITH INITIATING ACTION PROGRAM TO REMEDY DEFICIENCIES IN CIVIL AVIATION SYSTEM WHICH ARE BEING PUBLICIZED DAILY AS RESULT REVELATIONS AT INQUIRY INTO KANO ACCIDENT. WHILE OBI AND CAD ACTING DIRECTOR OGUNBIYI ARE MOST EXPOSED, IT PROBABLE THAT ALL FMG EXECUTIVES RESPONSIBLE FOR NIGERIAN AVIATION AND AIRWAYS FEEL THAT SOME KIND OF PROMPT ACTION IS ESSENTIAL IF THEY ARE TO MAINTAIN ANY STANDING WITHIN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

3. THEREFORE, TIME HAS PROBABLY PASSED FOR ANY TYPE OF EXERCISE LABELLED "STUDY"; ACTION IS NOW KEY WORD.
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PRELIMINARY 60- DAY SURVEY MENTIONED REFTTEL (B) WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE REJECTED BY FMG IF PRESENTED IN THAT FORM. MOT BELIEVES THAT A " STUDY" MISSION WOULD BE ATTACKED AS MERE GESTURE DESIGNED TO BUY TIME WHILE TEMPERS COOL AFTER INQUIRY RESULTS ARE PUBLISHED. OF COURSE, PURPOSE OF STUDY MISSION COULD BE SERVED PARTLY BY INCORPORATION ITS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS INTO A LARGER PROGRAM WHICH WOULD BE CLEARLY AIMED AT CORE OF CIVIL AVIATION PROBLEMS THAT NOW SEEM SO OBVIOUS TO AIR TRAVELLERS IN NIGERIA, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO READ NEWSPAPERS.

4. PRESSURE IS FOR PROMPT ACTION PROGRAM EVEN THOUGH SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE, AT LEAST INITIALLY, MORE COSTLY AND WOULD PROBABLY RUN COUNTER TO SUCH BASIC FMG PRECEPTS IN DEALING WITH NON- AID FOREIGN TECHNICIANS AS " NO CONTINUING DUTY- FREE PRIVILEGES" AND " NO EXEMPTIONS FROM REGULAR TAXES." AS OBI INDICATED, IT POSSIBLE THAT ONCE FMG SEES SCOPE AND COST ESTIMATES, EXTENT OF THESE DIFFICULTIES WILL CAUSE IT TO SEEK SOLUTION, AT LEAST PARTLY THROUGH AID PROGRAM. THE AID APPROACH NOT ONLY OFFERS ADVANTAGE OF LOWERING REAL COST TO FMG BUT IS ALSO A RECOGNIZED INSTITUTIONAL CHANNEL FOR PROVIDING ACCEPTABLE STATUS FOR FOREIGN TECHNICIANS, E. G., EXEMPTION FROM CUSTOMS DUTY AND FROM OTHER TAXES, ETC.

5. HOWEVER, AID PROCEDURES ARE USUALLY VIEWED AS TIME-CONSUMING HERE. MOT PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT ANY PROPOSAL NOT TO PLACE FAA ASSISTANCE UNDER AID UMBRELLA WOULD BE REGARDED AS A " LACK OF SENSE OF URGENCY" IN KEY PARTS FMG. MOT CLEARLY PREFERS THAT ANY EVENTUAL TURN TO AID BE DEMONSTRABLY A " LAST RESORT" RATHER THAN " FIRST RECOURSE."

6. WE ARE ALSO INCLINED TO DOUBT WISDOM AT THIS TIME OF SUGGESTING A GROUP (PARA 5 REFTTEL (B) WITH LEADER AND SOME TECHNICIANS COMING FROM FAA AND BALANCE FROM PRIVATE COMPANIES. FIRST OF ALL, IT NOT CERTAIN THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE CHEAPER. SECONDLY, IF IT WERE, NIGERIANS WOULD EITHER BE ALL THE MORE SUSPICIOUS OF FAA PRICES OR WOULD SUSPECT QUALITY OF PRIVATE PERFORMANCE.
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SONNEL. THEY WOULD DOUBT THAT FAA IS PAYING MORE THAN

MARKET PRICE FOR FIRST- RATE PERSONNEL AND AT THIS STAGE WOULD WANT NOTHING LESS THAN TOP QUALITY PEOPLE. ON BALANCE WE VIEW POSSIBLE SAVINGS AS MINIMAL AND RISK OF FURTHER IRRITATING NIGERIANS IS HIGH IF WE WERE TO BROACH THIS SUGGESTION AT THIS LATE DATE.

7. EMBASSY BELIEVES WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO GIVE NIGERIANS ESTIMATES OF SCOPE AND COSTS OF PURELY FAA ASSISTANCE. THERE COULD BE SEVERAL SETS OF ESTIMATES COVERING DIFFERENT TYPES AND DIFFERENT SIZED MISSIONS. THEY COULD ALL START WITH SMALL GROUP OF 3-6 PEOPLE WHO WOULD DETERMINE ULTIMATE SIZE OF TEAM, AFTER DEFINITIVE ON- SOPT ASSESSEMENT. PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS APPRAACH AND STUDY MISSION MENTIONED REFTEL IS THAT SMALLER GROUP WOULD BE DEFINITELY COMMITTED TO STAY ON AS NUCLEUS FOR LARGER PROGRAM. IT WOULD BE DESCRIBED AS FIRST SEGMENT OF ASSISTANCE GROUP.

8. AS IT APPEARS LIKELY ANNUAL AVERAGE PER- MAN COST WILL BE IN RANGE OF 80,000 DOLLARS TO 100,000 DOLLARS, WE WOULD HOPE TO SAY AT TIME OF SUBMISSION OF ESTIMATES THAT, AS FMG HAS KNOWN FOR SOME TIME, WE REMAIN WILLING DISCUSS MEANS OF FINANCING AT LEAST PART OF THESE COSTS IN A WAY THAT COULD LIGHTEN FMG BURDER, IF MOT WISHES. REINHARDT

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